

February 21, 2017

Good Afternoon Senators and State Representatives,

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak here today. My name is Kelley McKearney, and I am in fifth grade at St. Mary Magdalen School in Oakville, CT. I live in Thomaston, Connecticut.

When I was born, my Mom decided to stay at home to raise me, instead of putting me in daycare. In September 2007, when I was a little over a year, my Mom started attending the Plymouth Family Resource Center Learn together groups, with our friends from Terryville.

Thomaston does not have a Family Resource Center, so the closest one is Plymouth. Since I am the oldest, and I didn't come with a manual, Mom really benefitted from the resources within the Plymouth Family Resource Center.

My mom learned about age appropriate behaviors, and resources to help me grow smarter.

When I was little, I was super shy and at first I did not interact with all the children or the teachers. The parent educator came to our house for a home visit. At the visit, the parent educator played games with me, and talked to mom a lot. After the home visit, I was like a social butterfly at the Learn Together Groups. I was comfortable with the group, and couldn't wait to see the parent educator.

My parents didn't send me to preschool until I was 4 years old. So having the connection with the school settings from the family resource center, helped me quickly become comfortable with preschool.

Mom attended other programs from the family resource center, such as classes that helped her become a better parent for me and my sisters. She took the People Empowering People program which allowed her to give back to the Plymouth Community for allowing her to attend the family resource center programs.

My sisters benefitted from the family resource center programs too. We are all here today to support the Connecticut Family Resource Centers.

I would like to ask you to please continue funding for the Connecticut Family Resource Centers. These centers currently run on bare minimum funds, and compete with the school to fundraise. If you cut these programs, Connecticut Families will suffer a huge loss.

Thank you for your time, and your service work to Connecticut.

Kelley McKearney
Thomaston, CT